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LATEST PICTURES OF SPORT

In the Olden and Modern Days

THE OLD ENGLISH SQUIRE

(As Seen in Many a Sporting Print)

A BOUT fifty years ago, when old George Third was King,
And the Prince, the star of fashion, brightly shone in pleasure's ring,
The English country Squire was a man of great renown,
He'd an old Hall in the country and a modern house in town.
A Justice of the Peace he was and also an M. P.
But was fettered to no party, his principles were free.
He counted in the Premium though his son was in the guards,
With Fox he sometimes voted, but much oftener played at cards.

He kept a stud of Racers 'twas his joy to see them run,
And his sideboards were well covered with the gold cups they had won.
To the town he represented every year he gave a plate,
And to the course, in coach and six, he always came in state;
Six goodly nags they were, though very fat and slow,
Their manes were decked with ribbons, and their flowing tails also;
His lady sat beside him tall and upright as a wand,
And the people loudly cheered him on alighting at the stand.

He kept a pack of fox hounds of pure old English breed;
Most musical and staunch they were, but not so much famed for speed;
His hunters were enduring, and could go a decent pace;
To suit his hounds he bred them, not to run a steeple-chase:
He boldly went at hedge or gate, nor stop'd at ditch or brook.
And many a Melton Mowbray swell might shy the leap he took.
'Twas a pleasant sight to see him thro' a bun-fence make a gap,
With a pig-tail like a drum stick, cocking out behind his hat.

On the first day of September, as the season came around,
With his pointers in the stubble he was always to be found,
Though his gun was like a musket, an old fashioned flint and steel,
Wide muzzled and a kicker, she was heavy in the heel.
Yet birds, they being plentiful, he brought down many a brace :
And if he found them sitting why he show'd them little grace.
Few thought of shooting flying about fifty years ago,
Kill when you can was then the word and truest shooting low.

His rent day was at Michaelmas, within his oak roof'd wall,
Where borders, arms and horns of deer bedeck'd the panel'd wall ;
It was his custom and a good one with his tenantry to dine,
And a fine toast that he gave them, in a gold cup fill'd with wine,
Old claret rich and sparkling such as seldom's tasted now,
Was the King and Royal family, and God Speed the Plough.
Amen, exclaimed the Vicar when his patrons seated were,
While the farmers drank their bumpers off, and gave a hearty cheer.

'Tis now thirty years ago, the sad time I well remember,
On a dull and dreary day, in the dark month of November,
This good old English Squire, aged three score years and ten,
Was gathered to his fathers to the grief of all good men.
In the village church he's buried, scarce a mile from the old Hall,
His Heir was chief mourner, six old neighbors bore the Pall,
His memory is cherished yet, and many people say,
With the good old English Squire, good old times are gone away.